

Globalising control research: The politics of urban security in and beyond the Alaouite Kingdom of Morocco

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Abstract

How do urban security assemblages evolve? Scholars inspired by Deleuze's *Control Thesis* detect profound shifts in the ways security operates. Different to Foucault's disciplinary logics, they argue, security assemblages now rely intimately on expanding casts of policing agents, digital surveillance and statistical knowledge(s). They reach beyond enclosures and national borders, and they challenge democratic politics ever more forcefully. Whether this general trajectory of security management holds true across the global cityscape is yet far from evident. Not only do most studies of contemporary control draw conclusions from European and North American cases exclusively. Many also reproduce and project abroad distinctively Eurocentric assumptions about state-society relations, governance and insecurity. This article foregrounds and problematizes these penchants. It then looks at the Moroccan city of Marrakech to detail how urban security assemblages may evolve in different ways, at other speeds, and following different steering logics than what is generally set out by research on control. The article concludes with a discussion of how insights offered by places such as Marrakech contribute to more robust, analytically refined and globally inclusive research on the contemporary politics of urban security.

Introduction

Reflexive scholars are intimately interested in security dispositives' socio-material composition and political performativity.¹ Security dispositives norm and normalise social behaviour and are thus crucial tools for policing and societal steering (Garland 1990, Foucault 2004). Yet while this general role is widely accepted in security studies, the dynamic re-composition of security ensembles attracted more attention recently.² This is particularly so in

¹ Acknowledgments and funding.

² This article focuses on situated socio-material formations that norm and normalise social behaviour, but are also heterogeneous and evolving, rest on distributed forms of agency and may be contested. Following the dominant language in Foucault and Deleuze, these are mostly called dispositive in this article. For better readability, however (and echoing Deleuze's own conflation of the terms), it also employs the notions of apparatus, ensemble and assemblages to point to the same formations. For elaborations on these interrelated concepts see Althusser (1971), Foucault (1977), Deleuze and Guattari (1987), Deleuze

scholarly quarters drawing on Gilles Deleuze's *Control Thesis*. Taking cue from the French theorist's influential philosophical statement, they investigate how security dispositives transcend enclosures and borders, and how they rely more strongly on high-tech sensors and statistical forms of knowledge. They analyse how security ensembles draw on expanding casts of security actors, private agents especially, and how they respond more rapidly to challenges under their purview (Deleuze 1992, Hardt 1998). Compared to earlier modes of operation, these observations suggest that policing becomes increasingly generalised, privatised and intrusive. Driven by neoliberal policy rationales and alarmist post-9/11 discourses, security dispositives become ever more problematic to democratic politics.

The transposition of Deleuze's control argument into security research offers a decidedly socio-material approach to emergent modes of political steering, and asks scholars to systematically address questions of democratic politics and emancipation (Hagmann 2017). These contributions notwithstanding, it remains to be asked whether the commonly described trajectories of contemporary security ensembles can be held to apply across larger sets of political, cultural, architectural and technological contexts. This is important to examine, since much Deleuze-oriented control research draws conclusions from Western casework. More often than not, observations focus on European or North American cities, more narrowly even a handful of places such as London or New York (Fawaz et al. 2012). When doing so, researchers rarely reflect on the particular state-society frameworks, governance models and notions of insecurity that underpin such sites. The result is that different to Deleuze's writing with Guattari, whose Eurocentrism became a matter of wide debate (Spivak 1988, Bignall and Pattson 2010), there has been little discussion of how research on control finds resonance elsewhere, or of how tacit scholarly tenets streamline security research to the characteristics of the hitherto preferred Western cases.

This is not to imply that works on Western urban security ensembles are ill-founded. They offer insightful accounts of policing in some of the world's most prominent places, and productive material with which to add to security theorising. Yet, the restrained focus on Western cases in general – and indeed, on megacities in the Anglosphere in particular – lends itself poorly to making larger claims about urban security dispositives' manifold reconfigurations (Adamson 2016). In the global cityscape, security ensembles recurrently enact other kinds of political regimes, or focus on other ideas of danger than those foregrounded by work on Western cities. They sometimes also cope with different built environments and historical (colonial) legacies, or operate in dissimilar economic and technological settings (Amar 2013). In order to better apprehend contemporary dynamics of control (to stick with Deleuze's term for emergent new security arrangements) and counter

(2006) and Agamben (2009), and in security and urban studies Abrahamsen and Williams (2011), McFarlane (2011) or Schindler (2017), among others.

the risk of scholarly projection, this diversity is crucial to recognise. This is not merely because a more global contextualisation of contemporary control practices can describe more variegated empirical trajectories of policing, and hence also more subtly differentiated principles of rule that govern large(r) shares of the global population. It is also because it prompts researchers to specify better the observations they make, reflect more systematically on the categories that help study security ensembles, and develop more globally inclusive theories of urban security politics. With this, it helps to globalise control research at empirical, methodological *and* analytical levels.³

The need for global contextualisation has been pointed to by anthropologists, geographers and urbanists who work on non-Western polities and began to lend more attention to security practices there. Research looking at Brazil, Central Africa, Eritrea, Kirgizstan, Mauritania, Nicaragua, Rwanda and Saudi Arabia, for instance, describes how ‘mundane’ security tools – such as roadblocks, ID cards, walls or urban planning – may persist or even proliferate in the digital age, whether in the absence of or in combination with high-tech monitoring (Rodgers 2004, Bozzini 2011, Pallister-Wilkins 2015, Schouten 2019). It shows how surveillance can be organised in more experiential and lateral ways (Purdekova 2011), public and private security agents – from informants to guards, gangs and managers of gated communities – may co-deploy in much more complex hierarchical relations (Caldeira 2001, Göpfert 2016, Abrahamsen and Williams 2011, Diphorn 2016, Denyer-Willis 2016), and substantive and procedural threat construction sometimes departs from patterns observed in the West (Wilkinson 2007, Amar 2009, Machold 2017). The same literatures also explains how security dispositives are shaped by local watchwords and actor-constellations (Frowd 2014, Beek and Göpfert 2015), socio-economic parameters (Simone 2001, Pieterse 2010), and, of course, colonial experiences (Brunet La-Ruche 2012, Owen 2016, Purdekova 2016). In doing so, they emphasise that their evolution is difficult to reduce to generalised ideas of neoliberalism or post-9/11 security politics.

Findings such as those do *not* reject the claim that control ensembles expand. But they challenge certain more general claims made about the ways security re-composes. How they do so has not been elaborated very systematically thus far, however, as insights from anthropology, geography and urban studies do not always travel widely in security studies research, but also because works on non-Western practices usually contribute to other scholarly debates than those held in security studies, which means they rarely engage

³ As developed in this article, globalisation refers to scholarship that recognises the planetary, temporal and intra-urban diversity of security politics, reflects on the distinctiveness of analytical tenets and accepts that Southern cases can contribute to theorising in their own right (i.e., are not merely places for empirical raw material). For the necessity, meanings and limits of a more global security studies, see the inaugural and ‘American bias’ special issues of this journal (Avant et al. 2016, Colgan et al. 2019). In urban studies, a similar debate runs under the name of Critical or Southern Urbanism (Robinson 2002, Mbembe and Nutall 2004, Sheppard, Leitner and Marianganti 2013).

particularly consequently with security studies concepts and frameworks – such as here, the notion of control (Kirvy 2018).⁴ The ambition of this article is to address this lacuna. Taking cue from the described findings, it aims to advance a more refined understanding of how, in the context of unprecedented urbanization, cities around the world are subject to changing forms of securing (Rodrigues, Brancoli and Amar 2017).

To what extent do security studies ideas of Deleuze's *Control Thesis* operate on distinctive, and perhaps provincial, analytical assumptions? And how can more contextualising apprehensions of urban security dispositives, their reconfiguration and relations with local political orders foster more robust ideas of contemporary security practices? This article focuses on these two interrelated questions, and hence seeks to both deconstruct *and* reconstruct control research. To do so, the article first sets out the *Control Thesis*' reception in security studies. It draws out its empirical and analytical inclinations, and proposes to re-engage the research perspective at the hands of more global casework and analysis. Following on to this, the article then presents one such effort. Looking at the Moroccan city of Marrakech, it details how urban control ensembles recomposed in that city in the past 10-15 years. Lastly, the final section and conclusion elaborate on how the insights offered by Marrakech speak back to control research's analytical penchants, and how they contribute – in their own right – to the development of a more global security studies.

The *Control Thesis* in security studies

The control argument harks back to the work of Michel Foucault, which established security dispositives as power- and purposeful steering instruments (Foucault 1991, 2004, Aradau and Neal 2018). Indeed, Gilles Deleuze's *Control Thesis* explicitly presents itself as commentary on Foucault and his ideas of how security apparatuses operate. Writing in the 1990s, Deleuze (1992, 2009) forcefully argued that societies changed and security arrangements adopted new qualities, to the point that a paradigm shift from discipline to control occurred (Kelley 2015). This evolutionary claim found significant echo in philosophy and the humanities, the audiences for which and in whose language Deleuze wrote (cf. Hardt and Negri 2000, Massumi 2002, Virilio 2012). Moving on from there, it was eventually also transposed into the wider social sciences (Rose 2000, Cheng 2008, Brusseau 2020).

⁴ For exceptions see Amar (2013) or Rodrigues, Brancoli and Amar (2017), even if these works engage security concepts other than the *Control Thesis*. Also see Loader and Percy (2012) for a call to bring criminology, anthropology and International Relations into closer conversation when studying security practices.

In this process, security researchers became interested in the argument, and they began to interpret it in ways that made it legible to their subfield.⁵ Owing to Deleuze's inspirational writing style and ambition to forestall analytical closure, this translation did not result in one well-delineated statement about control, a complete and perfectly settled analytical framework. It also did not lead to a perspective entirely faithful to Deleuze's original ideas, for that matter. Political economy oriented components especially – such as the notion of debt –, still are largely ignored in security studies transpositions.⁶ But it did result in a strand of work that, by drawing on Deleuze's *Control Thesis*, came to construe of current security dynamics in fairly distinctive and convergent ways, restating the *Thesis* in security parlance and operationalizing it for security research (Hagmann 2017). Seen in this rendition, the *Control Thesis* is an argument that makes claims on four dimensions, namely on security ensembles' internal reconfiguration, their relations with democratic life writ large, globalising reach and presence, and implicit agenda or deeper drivers.⁷

Specific changes in these four dimensions come together to constitute the paradigm shift to control: As regards the dispositives' internal reconfiguration, control is characterised by an unprecedented proliferation of normalising agents. In the *Society of Control*, many more numerous security actors, from uniformed police to transport officials, public health experts and urban planners collaborate for policing (Koskela 2003, Deleuze 2006). Private actors assume crucial roles in this process, as public authorities are understood to cede security management (very) widely to moneyed interests (Haggerty and Ericson 2000, Hallsworth and Lea 2011, Wichum 2013). At the same time, control practices are also seen to rely intimately on advanced surveillance technologies. CCTV cameras, sensors and databases became the backbones of contemporary monitoring and sorting, to the point where analogue instruments turn obsolete (Tiessen 2011, Muir 2012). Taken together, the recomposing dispositives no longer form static security ensembles but adapt ever more rapidly to changes in the social bodies they regularise (Rose 2000).

As they do so, scholars drawing on Deleuze find security ensembles to stand in more tense relations with democratic life than what was already the case with the 'older' Foucaultian

⁵ Deleuze holds no monopoly over control theorising, and Baudrillard and Baumann also seize the term (Simons 1995). Yet, Deleuze's notion clearly rings most widely throughout security studies. Also, one should add that further contributions by Deleuze, such as his notions of affect and becoming, are occasionally seized in security research (e.g., Adey 2008). Yet, it is no exaggeration to say that the *Control Thesis* is Deleuze's most explicit, comprehensive and widely invoked statement on security by far.

⁶ There exists an interesting symmetry of neglect in regard to Deleuze's *Control Thesis* here: Whereas security research downplays economic issues and focuses on security agents and technologies, urban studies does the inverse (Jazeel 2017).

⁷ See Hagmann 2017 for an elaboration on the original *Thesis* (which is set out in Deleuze 1992), its transposition into security studies and the grouping of its (numerous) sub-claims to the four sets of statements here. This article specifically centres on the security studies rendition of Deleuze's *Thesis* (and thus not the original *Thesis*), and the structuring effects of this particular transposition on control research.

disciplinary regimes (Poster 2009)⁸: As ‘super-panopticons’, the now augmented dispositives exercise considerably more intrusive forms of control (Lyon 2001). They become hard if not impossible to escape or conceal from, and operate in more gazing and distanced ways. Looking at populations like ‘god-like observers’ (Koskela 2003), they observe the *body politic* from afar and categorise it with abstract statistics and algorithms. In the view of some, sorting so became both more rigid and more divisive: This is the case for those who maintain that albeit monitoring everyone, control dispositives’ primary concerns practically rest with pre-identified problem groups such as youngsters or foreigners, who are subject to particularly targeted and repressive regulation. The ever more forceful implementation of this penchant hardens the idea of some being different from society, and this divisive logic is furthered by the institutionalisation of chosen measures (Newman 2009, Virilio 2012). It is following such rationales that scholars transposing Deleuze into security research are so sceptical of control dispositives, and that some equate them with authoritarianism, the ‘security state’ or even ‘soft fascism’ (cf. Hardt 1998, Hallsworth and Lea 2011, Wichum 2013).

This said, control dispositives are also seen so critically because they expand so widely. On one hand, scholars appealing to Deleuze point to their operational de-territorialisation. Contrary to older disciplinary dispositives focusing on confined spaces – such as schools, barracks or prison camps –, the new ensembles monitor social behaviour across much larger spaces (Lyon 2001). In the society without walls ‘geography has ended’ (Lacy 2008). It is a common position in work echoing Deleuze to see policing as having become ubiquitous, to the point where citizens turn into ‘inmates outside the prison’ (Hardt and Negri 2000). On another, the new dispositives are also considered having become global phenomena themselves. Some argue that they are now present ‘everywhere in every major city’ (Koskela 2003). Others more sweepingly suggest that they developed into one planetary control arrangement altogether (Hardt 1998).

As this indicates, the security dispositives’ evolution is usually sketched in unidirectional terms in works appropriating the *Control Thesis*. There is a fair amount of ambivalence as to whether their perfection unfolds horizontally and rhizomatically, or is orchestrated top-down by some systematic force (Deseriis 2011). Yet, observers clearly agree that security ensembles do get more restrictive over time. This trend is sometimes explained by continuous innovation in surveillance technology. More often, however, it is seen driven by the pervasive logics of neoliberalism and post-9/11 discourses of catastrophic terrorist harm (Coaffee et al.

⁸ It is a central point in Deleuze and texts invoking Deleuze to sketch control as different from discipline. Poster (2009) constructively argues that it is more sensible to *not* consider these modes mutually exclusive. Control and discipline practices can co-exist, and so the former might be better conceived as intensification and spatial expansion of the latter than something entirely different. This view is also shared by Kelly (2015), who offers a detailed, albeit scathing, reconstruction of Deleuze’s personal and intellectual relations with Foucault.

2009). These causes are little debated (or leave no room for reflected discussion), which is why – together with the qualifications of authoritarianism outlined earlier – great many scholars invoking Deleuze’s *Thesis* demand to reject or resist the new ensembles (e.g., Lacy 2008, Newman 2009, Reid 2014, Lundborg 2016).

Taken together, Deleuze’s *Control Thesis* – as it is unpacked by security studies and made accessibly to research there – thus makes a comprehensive argument about emerging modes and politics of policing. This perspective is highly productive to international security studies: It directs attention to evolving agency landscapes and the dynamic re-composition of complex security assemblages. It focuses on novel de-territorialisation processes and expanding infrastructural powers (Mann 1984), while also problematizing the societal finalities that come with security production. In doing so, the control perspective offers a sophisticated and productive grid of intelligibility for apprehending highly topical political practices, the proliferation of (in-)security logics in public space and everyday life especially, but also the expansion, digitisation and internationalisation of security systems more generally. In short, it adds a decidedly contemporaneous and dynamic perspective to more Foucaultian takes on security ensembles.

The not-so-global empirics and analytics of control research

These merits notwithstanding, it doesn’t require strong postcolonial sensitivity to spot distinctively Eurocentric undercurrents in this larger body of work and the perspective it advances. Already, there is a powerful inclination to conclude to novel security practices from Western cases and megapolises in the Anglosphere, i.e., empirical laboratories that are neither representative of the world’s most common city type nor respectful of planetary variations in cultural and political histories and systems, architectural traditions or technological and economic realities (Robinson 2002, Miraftab and Kudva 2014).⁹ More important yet, the described control perspective also relies rather heavily on – and it thus also instantiates and projects abroad – a set of analytical *a priori* that echo all too intimately European and North American experiences. With this, control research, which draws inspiration from an elaborate philosophical argument about contemporary monitoring and regularisation, and a theorist striving to consequently avoid analytical closure, risks to itself normalise security research to distinctive views and conclusions.

⁹ Despite their popularity, megacities are outliers. Intermediary cities of 50’000 to 1’000’000 inhabitants dominate the global cityscape, and harbour the most pressing public policy challenges, from health to housing, sustainability and security (UN ECOSOC 2016, United Cities and Local Governments 2017).

For example, this occurs through implicit state-society concepts. The strong emphasis of scholarship and casework on privatisation not merely echoes widespread Western practices. Analytically, it also presupposes an established public authority from which policing can be transferred away, and a marketplace keen and capable of implementing such function. With this, an implied analytical tenet normalises specific forms statehood and economics as starting point for investigation. It turns research less receptive to limited and patchy political systems, and polities with ineffective, clientelist or dirigist market structures. Indeed, beyond its presumption, government is also idealised. The qualification of privatisation as surrender of public interests reveals a risky vision on public authority as inherently more accountable, or responsive, than the private sector. Such view is difficult for global theorising and research, and as an assumption, breaks down particularly rapidly in repressive regimes that fortify their rule with crude force. Incidentally, it also denies more refined accounts of security management among democracies, as the legitimacy of public institutions there is simply posited, and hence treated as if in no need of differentiation.

The democratic theme also instructs control analysis in other ways, however. Scholars' concern with democracy's protection from security clearly directs attention to places where participatory rule prevails. Democracy must have already arrived for it to come under siege and Deleuze's control argument to operate properly, which is why quite some non-Western cases become unlikely, although not impossible, research sites. The definition of security as inherently corrosive amplifies this penchant. As a categorical qualification, it empowers articulate rejections of control logics when they emerge – but it offers few ideas of how to cope with security dispositives when already living under their purview. Premised on an *a priori* of democratic rule, control research operates from a surprisingly 'saturated' position of wealth and wellbeing. It emphasises the potential loss of achievements attained, yet does not articulate a progressive strategy by which unfulfilled aims, such as rule of law or democracy, might be brought about in authoritarian systems, such as one-party polities, clientelist and strongman societies, or – as in the case of Morocco below – pseudo-democratic monarchies.¹⁰

Implicit but distinctive ontologies of time, technology, and core-periphery relations also normalise security research based on Deleuze's control argument. Quite many such texts come with an activist language of capturing recent, on-going or pending practices. They position themselves as works on the imminent, so to say, yet often offer decidedly unidirectional ideas of whereto policing is and can be headed – namely, towards ever tighter restriction. Such linear narratives undercut more contingent trajectories, to the point where security dispositives' actual fluctuations, their (infrequent) reduction in scope, and

¹⁰ Note that the pervasive focus on security politics *in and by* liberal polities has been questioned in regard to Foucault's discipline, on which Deleuze expands (Mitchell 1988, Selby 2007, Pallister-Wilkins 2015). The *Control Thesis*' own such attraction described in this article has not been problematized so far, however.

(occasional) reorientation to more integrative, transparent and democratically legitimised finalities and modes of operation cannot be captured (Poster 2009). Reminiscent of diagnoses of the North American and European far-left, scholarship drawing on Deleuze historicises security politics, but does not embrace truly genealogical research when so doing.

The ‘modernist’ focus on new technology adds further determinism. The strong emphasis on distanced and digital surveillance not just captures concerns particularly salient to societies in the Global North – analytically, it also steers research to places where advanced security technologies are readily available in the first place. With this, it deflects attention from political and social systems that are (factually, or generally perceived as) less economically potent and technologically savvy, and maybe even suggests that enhanced forms of control might not exist in those (an idea that the Moroccan case below quickly rejects). At the same time, the control perspective strongly regularises security to statistics-based control practices in places where high-tech is in reach. The pronounced emphasis on cameras, databases, access codes and sensors downplays human agents, mundane technologies and experiential knowledge(s). It also helps presenting security ensembles in gazing and machine-like terms, a view that then sustains the idea of security politics being totalising and distanced.

Lastly, the lack of reflection on neoliberalism and post-9/11 politics as drivers of control unwittingly ensnares the field in a paternalistic core-periphery ontology. By leaving these drivers unproblematic, security research reproduces a narrative according to which Western economics and politics are dominant and globally expanding, yet themselves untouched by third influences (cf. Hardt and Negri 2000). Even if meant as laudable critique of Western societies’ fatal attraction to capitalism and the post-9/11 politics of exception – the heavy-handed emphasis on these notions creates a colonial momentum in which the global relevance of Western concerns is naturalised. In this process, empirical investigations into other and further reasons for security systems’ reconfiguration are left ignored. Indeed, not even the transposition of the few identified causes across Western societies is empirically verified. Their dominance is simply presumed.

Taken together, contemporary control practices, as they came to be understood and researched in international security studies, are not merely assessed in empirically selective ways. Their diagnosis also instantiates distinct analytical categories. These steer research to places where public authority is given, democracy and liberal market logics are predominant, and societal achievements exist and can be protected. They also encourage linear and techno-centric accounts of security management based on close-to universalised ideas of underlying causes. Such analytics is highly ambivalent for investigations into contemporary global security practices: In the West, it makes difficult to construe security ensembles in function of European and North American societies’ own, fairly heterogeneous configurations and

trajectories – since, even if the control argument resonates closely with Western processes, it also standardises research across those social and political systems (Donzelot and Gordon 2008, Comaroff and Comaroff 2012). At the same time, the implied tenets turn the *Control Thesis* into a difficult reference scheme for great many cities elsewhere in the world. Use there is made hard or unlikely by implied analytical dispositions – which may also be why, besides practical and financial challenges of engaging in global research, the argument is so insouciantly universalized and reproduced, as opposed to being contextualised in place.

Controlling urban life in Marrakech

Yet as said, while it is paramount to recognise these limitations, they should not deny the literature all merit. Scholars drawing on Deleuze play pioneering roles in transposing an evocative and sophisticated commentary on political steering into social science and security research, pushing Foucaultian diagnoses to become ‘more contemporary’ so to say. They produce topical empirical accounts of shifting security management in some prominent places, generate new insights into evolving rationalities of rule, and help question the balance at stake between security and democratic life writ large. What is more, their contributions’ urban predilection is clearly well taken. Although it must not let rural control ensembles go ignored, that heuristic acknowledges the urban age’s arrival and persistence (Graham 2009, Curtis 2016). It accounts for the fact that urban life is now crucial to all parts of the world (Parnell et al. 2009), cities provide crucial infrastructures to societies at large (Larkin 2003, Brenner and Schmid 2015), and urban security management becomes a distinctive and ever more powerful policymaker agenda (Coward 2009, Coaffee 2017, Machold 2019).

Seen this way, it seems more productive to reconstruct the research agenda than to dismiss it out of hand, as a more radical postcolonial perspective would have it (Leitner and Sheppard 2015).¹¹ This is to say it is useful to *both* test the partiality and distinctiveness of analytical and empirical claims made, *and* attempt a more contextualising rendering of the agenda’s core interests – such as by means of fracturing and reconstructing its perspective through insights offered by further places (Chakrabarty 2000, Roy and Ong 2011). It is following this direction that the subsequent section takes control research beyond its Western ‘comfort zone’.

¹¹ Conversely, it also seems improper to shield it from all critical re-engagement. On panels, some ‘Deleuzian’ scholars opined that his argument applied to the post-9/11 neoliberal West alone. This argument is unconvincing, given his *Thesis* was formulated years earlier and doesn’t make such scope conditions; control (and discipline) theory and practice was ever since most closely intertwined with colonialism (and thus stretched far beyond Europe, cf. Mitchell 1988, Comaroff and Comaroff 2012, Schindler 2017); and numerous works *do* purport to analyse *the* changes in global control, with no limitations or differentiation. Also, some more activist scholars argued that the *Thesis* must not be subjected to empirical and analytical differentiation, for its essence lies in advancing a (superior) Marxist agenda. Such totalizing partisan protection of the argument runs counter to basic scholarly principles, and indeed, the *Thesis*’ wide resonance in security research makes it particularly important to subject it to critical examination.

Looking at the Moroccan city of Marrakech, its deliberately deep empirical investigation traces how security ensembles changed there in the past 10-15 years, and in relation to the *Control Thesis*' four groups of statements laid out earlier (their points about security ensembles' internal reconfiguration, relations with democratic politics, globalising reach and presence, and implicit agenda or drivers serve as structuring heuristic). To operationalize this endeavour – and sensitise to the circumstance that security dispositives may, in fact, also vary across one and the same city (Robinson 2016, McFarlane, Silver and Truelove 2016) –, it focuses on three functionally different urban spaces, the train station as place of public mobility, *Place 16 Novembre* and surrounding avenues as open public space, and the *Médina* as site of mass commerce.¹² The section following to the case study then elaborates transversally on how the observations speak back – or not – to the analytical tenets questioned earlier. The conclusion brings the article full circle and discusses the contributions that a de-familiarisation of control research makes to global security studies.

As laboratory and source for security theorising, Marrakech lends itself well to these aims. Located in a hereditary monarchy with a 'ruling king',¹³ Islamic country, strong tribal society, economically emergent nation, and conjoined North African and colonial (French) architecture, the city's political, societal, economic and physical characteristics differ from those encountered in European and North American sites. With its 920'000 inhabitants, Marrakech is also an intermediary and ordinary city.¹⁴ It plays significant roles in the long and rich history of the region and the country's ruling dynasties, but is not the capital of Morocco and far from the economic and political powerhouses along the coast. Located in Southern Morocco at the High Atlas's footsteps, Marrakech is an important regional market town and administrative centre. It is also a preferred holiday location for Moroccans, and since a few years now a popular international tourist destination (Agence Urbaine 2014).

Protecting public transport

¹² The choice of multiple urban sites helps operationalize a research focus on 'the city'. Its spatial heuristic also renders the analysis more receptive to varied forms of control than an *a priori* focus on distinct actors or instruments (Williams 2016). The selection of sites derives from fieldwork and is informed by the anthropological argument according to which societies are constituted by ideal-typical 'societal infrastructures', sites of mobility, public life, and economics especially (Larkin 2003). The article's empirical narrative draws on site visits, primary and secondary literatures, and about fifty interviews with site-specific security agents, infrastructure operators, public administration officials, NGO staff, academics, foreign diplomats, international SSR experts, inhabitants, passengers and site users.

¹³ Although Morocco is a constitutional monarchy, the king has ample powers. He directs ministerial meetings, commands the security forces, may rule by *Dahir* (decree), is the country's religious leader, and a powerful economic force. Beyond formality, the palace also orchestrates a large patronage network extending into government and party politics, business and civil society (Madani et al. 2012, Saliba 2016).

¹⁴ The 'ordinary city' idea draws on Robinson (2002). It stands for a de-centring of city analysis from popular ideas of some places (such as LA, New York or London) being more advanced than, or hierarchically superior to, others. This means that cities such as Marrakech are *not* approached in terms of what they lack in comparison to Western frameworks, but that its security politics is traced in its own right. And indeed, the empirical section shows that there are few reasons to deem Moroccan security dispositives inferior to those of others, considering that they excel with high (albeit utterly undemocratic) effectiveness.

The *Gare de Marrakech*, the city's train station, offers a first set of ideas of how security recomposes in Southern Morocco, and how observed features allow to re-engage tenets implied in control research. Built in 1923 by the French Protectorate West of town, the station was moved to a more central location in 2008 by the *Office National des Chemins de Fers* (ONCF). Mimicking the city walls' splendid gates – and likened to no less than New York Central Station by local observers (Kamal 2018) –, the new station's six platforms end Morocco's southernmost railway line, a (since 2018 double-track) line to Casablanca via Settat, and further to Tanger and Oujda from there. Comprising five train services in 2010 still, 18 daily compositions depart for Casablanca in 2020, transporting about 4'500 passengers per day. The station is designed to accommodate network expansions, a track to Agadir and high-speed TGV connection from Casablanca especially, though the realisation of these projects still lies far in the future. Since 2013, the *Gare* is part of a national strategy to populate stations with commerce, international coffee houses and fast-food chains. Unlike other Moroccan stations, where all one can buy is tickets, Marrakech thus has a *gare de nouvelle génération*.

At its doorstep, the station connects to *Supratours*, ONCF's bus service to Agadir, and Marrakech's armada of *petits taxis*. It also connects to the busy urban and periurban bus services. Since the collapse of the state bus agency in 1999, these are handled by ALSA, a Spanish company that headquarters outside Marrakech and operates in four Moroccan cities. Aided by the World Bank, the city inaugurated a Bus Rapid Transport system in 2017, connecting the *Gare* to the city's *Massira* West End, *Place 16 Novembre* in the New Town, and *Bab Doukkala* in the Old Town. With these features, the station is the city's primary transport interchange, strategic in its connection to the populous coast and Marrakech's expanding Western districts. It is frequented particularly often when train arrive or depart, but its cool hall, shops and restaurants also attract visitors otherwise.

In what's a first departure from control research's claim about policing-at-a-distance, the *Gare* features an unchanged, strong and very visible presence of the *Sûreté*, the powerful national police commanded by the Interior Ministry. Day in and day out, Morocco's 'urban police' is stationed next the main entrance (cf. figure 1).¹⁵ Traffic police also deploy in large numbers to crossroads across the country and are thus nearby. For a few years now, the Interior Ministry has two plain-clothes agents inside the station. This is not official, however, for ONCF is formally in charge of securing its premises. To do so, the railway agency commands an 800-man strong *Police Ferroviaire*. Since the mid-2000s, these agents concentrate on patrolling trains and tracks, however, as building security was subcontracted to

¹⁵ The *Sûreté Nationale* only operates in cities. In the countryside, the *Gendarmerie Royale*, an entity of the Defence Ministry, is in charge of police work.

gardiennage. In seeming support of the *Control Thesis*, numerous private guards observe all entrants and seek close-up face-recognition of young men. Trained by ONCF, they are unarmed and do not apprehend individuals, but continuously inform the police of their observations.

Indicative of monarchical governance logics, inter-agency cooperation is yet highly limited or unidirectional at the *Gare* – security management doesn't evolve into an interdisciplinary partnership of mutually supportive security agents, as control research argues (and is sometimes seen in Western cities). ONCF's local control room, for instance, neither includes firefighters nor ambulance, and most certainly not the police, which stands in superior relations to civilian agencies and rarely collaborates with them. In case of incidents, the *chef de gare* – or his deputy – must hence walk up to police officers stationed outside, which take things from there. Still, ONCF seeks to streamline its own security efforts through a new internal *Pôle de Sécurité et Contrôle* since 2009, and since 2010, it also promotes inter-functional exchange with first responders, though again not the police, by means of an annual *journée sécurité* (ONCF 2017). The *Wali*, the governor who leads the Interior Ministry's regional presence, is named by the king, and represents the true local political and administrative power irrespective of City Hall and the newly created Regional Council, occasionally federates non-police actors to security work. ALSA recently became partner of such impromptu enlisting by the police. On short notice, it is called upon to reroute transports during football games, or to interrupt bus service during international and royal visits, when entire avenues are cordoned off. The company receives no advance information for such events, however, and so its vehicles get stuck for hours in the police forces' unexplained deployments.

[Figure 1 about here]

The instruments employed at the station also partly differ from functions foregrounded by research operationalising Deleuze's *Thesis*. For instance, there is a fair amount of low-tech interventions that help secure the *Gare*. Entrances are gated overnight and the glassy main entry reinforced with subtle anti-car bollards. Platform access is controlled, and since 2005 ONCF fences-off tracks. To reduce risk of theft, the station's ticket machines were placed next to a manned ticket booth in 2010. Since 2011, access to the freight terminal requires a badge. Compared to such efforts, high-tech installations yet became more sophisticated with the new station. Advanced cameras were installed throughout in 2008, and later upgraded to face-recognition capability. Since 2009, ONCF pursues a national video-surveillance strategy, which includes expansion and upgrading of cameras, control rooms in major stations, and the creation of a *Poste de Commandement National Sécurité* in Rabat. All ONCF cameras will connect to the latter command centre by fiberglass, so to allow real-time coordination of the

Police Ferroviaire and ONCF's private guards (ONCF 2018). Cameras are currently also installed on trains, though only inside the conductor's cabin and towards the track ahead, not in coaches.

Compared to those governmental efforts, the introduction of new technologies by ALSA is more limited. Between 2013-2016, the company retrofitted busses with three cameras each, one to the front, one on the driver, and one in the cabin. The city's new BRT trolleys also have cameras. The technological securing of bus stops remains unchanged, though. Given Southern Morocco's warm and dry climate, they are minimalistic and exceedingly transparent, often comprising little more than a bus-stop sign and bench. What is more, ALSA sees no need for video-systems at bus stops, for 'the Moroccan police is everywhere anyhow'.

Overall, the dispositive centring on Marrakech's main site of public transport thus excels by visible presence of security agents and growing capacity for quick reaction. Police is permanently on-site and constantly briefed by auxiliary private agents, and high-tech surveillance developed for instantaneous operational guidance of personnel. With this, the security ensemble around the *Gare* indeed becomes more flexible and difficult to avoid, as control research suggests, for digital and human eyes multiply. Contrary to what this view proposes, however, its operation is barely indirect. There are indications of comprehensive background phone and data surveillance by intelligence services, but everyday security management relies strongly on experiential knowledge and face-to-face control, i.e., visibility and close proximity of normalising agents to the *body politic*, not statistical metrics.

The security ensemble is highly distanced politically, however. The 2011 reforms ceded competencies to parliament and new Regional Councils. Also, King Mohammed VI addressed the security forces' human rights record in recent years. But the security sector – from the *Forces Armées* and *Gardes Royales* to the *Sûreté*, *Gendarmerie*, *Forces Auxiliaires*, and different intelligence *Bureaux* – remains under the palace's tight control, and security agencies show little transparency (Mattes 2014). The *Sûreté* operates an emergency number, but no website through which its organisation or mission are explained. Its press conferences allow for *Q&A* since 2004, but remain rare and unsubstantial. With this, the police's main channel of communication with the population is *Al Shurta*, a monthly magazine on diverse facets of the force put on sale by street vendors since 2005.¹⁶ 'Modelled in style and price on women's magazines', this glossy bilingual publication expresses an ambition 'to reconcile the

¹⁶ *Al Shurta* (Arabic for 'the police') arguably appears in 50'000 monthly copies. It contains lengthy reprints of royal speeches, articles on police horses, vehicles and uniforms, and little-informative texts on the police's success in combatting organised crime, or drug trafficking. It is a pricey magazine and doesn't circulate widely.

police with citizens' (Tuquoi 2015). The police's Facebook page, created in 2011 for interaction with the citizenry, finds no meaningful participation whatsoever.¹⁷

ONCF echoes this pattern of statist non-communication. Although having a website, it doesn't answer queries made through the channels offered to public communication, i.e., web-forms, emails or calls. Its annual reports now include a dedicated section on rail and station security, but present pertinent agency contributions in grandiose and intangible terms.¹⁸ As a company, ALSA doesn't belong to the governmental security dispositive. Because of this perhaps, the bus company is markedly more accessible. It informs openly about its activities, organises security awareness days with schools and neighbourhood associations, and voluntarily offers driving training as to improve on the accident-prone traffic environment. It also showcases security efforts to state agencies, which yet show little interest in exchange.

With ONCF's development of integrated surveillance, security around the *Gare* shows signs of de-territorialisation, quite along the lines of control research, for the system will empower coordination of security personnel across larger territory. Also, the police extended its reach with new stations in additional towns, and new *postes de proximité* (small posts staffed 24/7) in agglomerations since 2015. This said, the globalisation of current security management described by control research remains difficult to confirm otherwise.¹⁹ The *Sûreté* was organised nationally ever since, and the new small town stations filled no void, for the *Gendarmerie*, Morocco's 'rural police' directed by the Defence Ministry, secures those areas otherwise. At the same time, the country's geographical situation, royal governance system and tense relations with neighbours undercut a transnational operational expansion of the dispositive. Indeed, also ONCF's expanding surveillance efforts must be evaluated carefully, since not all publicised government projects are followed up in practice or time.

This said, the dispositive's constitution internationalised in recent years. The *Institut Royal de Police* in Kenitra, the National Police Academy, began organising joint training programs with foreign police commanders, such as from Senegal. Construction of the new station was informed by international safety standards in architecture, and the ONCF now regularly exchanges with the *International Union of Railways* in Paris, whose Security Working Group

¹⁷ The inexperience, if not unwillingness, to share information about governmental security work was also manifestly echoed in the Regional Police Command's unfiltered astonishment to our request for expert interviews about the evolution of policing in Marrakech.

¹⁸ The 2015 report, for instance, argues that (non-technical) security is an 'evident necessity and priority' of the agency, '60% of our staff work on security', and 'security improved by 40% between 2010 and 2014' across the railway system – but gives no indication of what these numbers might refer to (ONCF 2015).

¹⁹ This doesn't mean Morocco wasn't involved in international security conduits earlier. Western powers strongly curtailed Morocco's sovereignty and in parts prescribed the organisation of its police forces at the 1906 *Algeiras Conference*. During the *French Protectorate* of 1912-1956, the country was then subject to even more direct and violent foreign repression. These imperialist schemes and international connections were quickly rescinded by Mohammed V (reign 1957-1961) and Hassan II (1961-1999), however, who reasserted the Alaouite dynasty's tight (despotic) control of the Moroccan security system.

it co-directs. Since 2011, ONCF convenes biannual meetings with international railway security experts in Rabat, and starting 2013, it began developing an integrated security and safety management system together with the French SNCF. ALSA imports safety standards from Spain since the beginning of operations in Marrakech.

Lastly, a combination of factors drives the dispositive's (re-)configuration and perfection. As control scholarship suggests, fear of terrorism is an important factor – also in Morocco, even if it doesn't link immediately to 9/11 there. Terrorism is a major topic in Morocco since the 2003 Casablanca bombings, and it was sustained by the 2011 Marrakech *Argana* attack, the occasional dismantling of cells across the kingdom and infrequent menaces of Al-Qaeda, ISIS and other groups against the country. Yet, there are also other causes and justifications. The station's construction followed new evacuation norms for large buildings – provisions not merely legislated, but in this case also enforced –, and its commercialisation created a desire to keep beggars at bay. As a company keen on extending service contracts, ALSA adopts higher security standards on its own and beyond what authorities require. It also does so to reduce the risk of traffic accidents, and prevent vandalism and sexual harassment on busses. Generally speaking, the police also seeks to combat crime ever more efficiently.

Yet, ONCF's use of private guards for building security is largely a government employment program for unskilled labour. Rather than representing a neoliberal cessation of public powers, it appeals to an extension of state power through the private sector. Important also, public order provides a general justification for security management around the *Gare*. Alluding to the troubled trajectories of post-revolutionary Tunisia and Libya, Morocco's tense relations with Algeria and continuing difficulties with West Sahara (a territory claimed by Morocco), authorities present the protection of the existing political system as crucial to the population's social and economic wellbeing. The strong governmental security apparatus – its upgrading, deep penetration of the terrain, and dissuasive show of force – is thus a potent justification in and of itself, no matter that the safeguarding of monarchical rule is now framed ever more benevolently as 'serving the populace'.

Securing open public space

This rationality is even more visible in open public space, such as *Place 16 Novembre* and its surrounding avenues. The New Town's largest square adjoins the main Post Office and the city's major banks.²⁰ It forms the nodal point of *Quartier Guéliz*, the upscale core of Marrakech's *Ville Nouvelle*, interlinks the city's main boulevards, and connects the New

²⁰ The *Ville Nouvelle* was founded in 1913 by the French about 2km West of the Moroccan settlement, the *Médina*. By 1930, the New Town accommodated 1'500 inhabitants, of which 1'000 Frenchmen. Today, the New Town has four times as many inhabitants as the *Médina*.

Town with the *Médina*. The complex crossroads was refurbished in 2007, and the large avenues radiating from it were renewed and equipped with traffic lights in 2014. Since then, the *Place* is no longer a mere traffic node, but also features a pedestrian zone separated from traffic, a surface shopping area, and Western-type boulevard cafés with free WiFi. *Place 16 Novembre* is used actively at day, but barely at night. Importantly, it is also a preferred site for demonstrations, such as by *Mouvement du 20 Février* during the Arab spring, or doctors, teachers and students more recently.

Unlike in Western cities, where public transport is subjected to particularly refined security strategizing because of concerns with terrorism, public space is the more sensitive domain in Morocco. Governmental forces are indeed more numerous and specialised on Marrakech's squares and avenues than at the train station. Similar to the latter, the *Sûreté* is permanently and visibly pre-deployed next the Post Office. Traffic police officers also remain abundant despite the new traffic lights that were supposed to replace them. Further forces deploy in addition, however. A new *Groupe de Sécurité Urbaine* operated on the square in 2005-2006, a robust, mobile and highly visible urban police unit. Rejected by the population as particularly corrupt and intrusive, this group was soon transformed into less visible riot control and background reinforcement units, the *Groupes Mobiles de Maintien de l'Ordre* and *Groupes d'Intervention Rapides*.²¹ Reflective of Moroccan security governance in which agencies have overlapping functions and incongruent jurisdictions, the *Forces Auxiliaires*, a paramilitary force occasionally deployed to suppress protest with their batons, also sometimes wanders *Place 16 Novembre*.

More important still, combined patrols of the *Forces Armées* and *Gendarmerie* – Defence Ministry forces not normally having jurisdiction in cities – now permanently tour the square and avenues. Equipped with rifles, the interdisciplinary three-men groups deploy day and night according to *Plan Hadar*, a militarised public security concept modelled on the French *Vigipirate* in 2014, and expanded in duration and size after the 2015 Paris *Bataclan* attack. Since 2016, a new motorbike-based rapid intervention unit is furthermore built up in function of new citywide surveillance technologies. Beyond this specialization of public security actors, private guards also became somewhat more numerous in the mid-2000s. Employed by shop owners and cafés, they drive homeless people and street vendors off the *Place*. They have no police powers, but inform the state services of their everyday observations, as do other stationary private agents nearby, notably *gardiens d'immeuble* and *gardiens de parc*.

[Figure 2 about here]

²¹ The *GSU* was nicknamed *10 Dirham* for the money it took. The *Groupes Mobiles* are not shy of showing force. At teachers' protests during fieldwork, their vehicles followed demonstrators in large numbers and at less than a meter distance.

The securing of Marrakchi public space includes low-tech efforts. Since the outset, the New Town was built on French ('Haussmannian') ideas of urban planning in which wide avenues facilitate rapid crosstown deployment. More recently, the square's renovation introduced subtle more contemporary 'security by design' components. The *Place* is now illuminated at night, and its pedestrian zone separated from traffic by fountains, bushes and stairs. Sidewalks were broadened and detached from streets by kerbstones. High-tech installations are yet considerably more prominent. At city entrances, where police checkpoints controlled mobility earlier, six automated cameras now register all vehicles. Impressively also, authorities installed 83 powerful high-mast CCTV cameras on all of the city's main routes, parks and squares (cf. figure 2). Completed in 2015, this process follows a national plan to have no fewer than 20'000 interlinked high-resolution cameras permanently survey Moroccan public urban space.²² Today, the Marrakchi police cameras connect by fiberglass to a large control room at the *Préfecture*, the regional police headquarters, where they are analysed in real-time. Since 2016, they are backed up with the aforementioned motorbike-brigade, whose rapid movement through town the control room directs.²³ Shop owners, finally, and international brands especially, also began installing basic video systems a few years ago, and since 2015, hotels must use metal detectors at main entrances. Compared to governmental efforts, businesses' use of advanced security technology is yet clearly much more limited.

With this, Marrakech's open public space is secured in highly state-centric ways, similar to what is seen at the *Gare*. Different to that site, however, the securing of open urban space is also more sophisticated and militarised. Drawing on pre-deployed and mobile intervention forces, more numerous security services, real-time surveillance, and expanding numbers of informants, this dispositive can operate ever more rapidly. And while its ambivalent relation with the populace and lack of operational internationalisation echo patterns described in case of the *Gare*, its expansion draws on some additional drivers. The new urban presence of soldiers and gendarmes is explained by the powerful terrorism and public order discourses mentioned earlier. The automated sensors on city exits and CCTV cameras installed throughout public space, however, are justified by the quest for policing effectiveness, and a new 'mobility of crime' brought to Marrakech with the 2007 Casablanca highway and its 2010 Agadir extension.²⁴ Police presence in general is also motivated by fear of vagabonds (some of which were found carrying knives), prevention of underage begging, and safeguarding of tourists venturing outside the Old Town. Shop owners, finally, employ

²² At the time of fieldwork, the same comprehensive public video-surveillance system was also already operational in Casablanca, Rabat and Fès, where it included even higher numbers of cameras.

²³ The control room can now also geo-locate emergency calls made to the police number '19', which also helps – together with the cameras – rapid deployment of forces.

²⁴ Casablanca to the North tends to bring more counterfeiters and organised crime, Agadir in the South-West more violent delinquents. Marrakech was not accessible by highway previously.

private guards in step with the city's recent commercialisation, and often install security technologies as simple fulfilment of new governmental decrees.

Safeguarding commercial space

Marrakech's Old Town, now the city's most important commercial space, offers a final set of ideas of how security management can depart from the trajectories set out by research on Western cities, and how this helps question and rework existing analytical tenets. Confined by Almoravid city walls, the *Médina* is Marrakech's original settlement. With 180'000 inhabitants today, it includes housing, schools, mosques, baths, markets, palaces, and vast *Souks*, artisanal workshops where handmade products are fabricated and traded. Its narrow streets and alleys form a dense urban fabric with few open spaces, such as most notably *Place Jemaa El-Fna*.²⁵ Marrakech's emblematic square lies at the centre of the Old Town next *Koutoubia*, a grand mosque of regional influence. As a lively market and meeting place, *Jemaa El-Fna* thrives on busy food-stalls, juice stands, snake charmers and the *halqa*, traditional storytelling circles named an immaterial world cultural heritage by UNESCO in 2001. Since then, the *Médina* attracts a rapidly growing number of foreign travellers. Aided by a new royal policy on tourism and the 2006 *Open Skies* treaty with the European Union, international visitors became an important source of income in the last 10-15 years. By 2017, Marrakech became the second most popular tourist destination in North Africa after Cairo.²⁶

Interestingly, security management in the *Médina* differs radically from the New Town. On *Jemaa El-Fna*, the *Sûreté* and *Forces Auxiliaires* visibly pre-deploy in a fenced-off ready-room on the southern corner (cf. figure 3). An imposing fortified police station houses the precinct's *Qadi* (police commander) and *Brigade Touristique*, a specialised police unit created in 2005 to assist tourists in case of harassment. Otherwise, however, the Old Town excels by striking absence of uniformed agents and official police personnel. Plain cloth police and intelligence agents do patrol the square since 2011, when an Islamist killed 17 at restaurant *Argana*. They also patrol the Old Town on motorbikes in evening hours, when alleys are dark and deserted.²⁷ Generally speaking the securing of the *Médina* yet operates through non-police units. A few of those are private security agents, who, since the early 2000s, work as

²⁵ In popular books, *Jemaa El-Fna* is often translated as 'assembly of the dead', in reference to the executions Sultans ordered on the square. As a starting point for a genealogy of rule, such interpretation offers a tempting Maghrebien equivalent to Foucault's focus on royal executions in medieval Paris. Historical evidence, however, suggests this interpretation to be flawed, for the name more likely emerges from the planned mosque for which the square left room (*El-Hna*, Arabic for 'bliss').

²⁶ Indicative of this growth is the increase of *Riads*, small guesthouses of oriental charm providing accommodation within city walls, from 20 in 2002 to 1'000 in 2016. The rapid expansion of tourism is also reason why Marrakech Airport is considerably better developed today than the city's train and road networks.

²⁷ Locals recognise them by their scooter model and the fact that they never smile.

doormen to some tourist cafés. In larger parts, however, Old Town security relies on an elaborate and deep informant network.

Dating back to Hassan II, Mohammed VI's father who ruled with iron hand between 1961 and 1999, this system centres on *chefs de quartier*, neighbourhood chiefs also called *Moqqadem* (or *Makhzen*, given their complicity in the larger royal ruling network). Day in and day out, these are found at the same location – such as in the *Mouassine* Old Town district, around the pharmacy's bench. From those places, the *Moqqadem* continuously collect and commission information on their area. Their informants are owners of kiosks, the *Médina*'s many tiny grocery stores often located at street intersections and rarely far apart. They also include street vendors, cleaners and household employees, individuals occasionally dispatched to verify things on behalf of the *chefs*.²⁸ Old Town security furthermore draws on neighbourhood guards. Residents of certain *derb* – the narrow and mazy dead-end alleys that fork off in multiple directions, only have one or two access points, and historically regroup houses of families from the same *bled* (tribal or rural origin) – collectively employ night-guards for their alleys. These report to the *Moqqadem*, too, although they are privately organised and paid.

[Figure 3 about here]

Unlike the New Town – where space is open, mobility less restricted, and housing more mixed – the *Médina*'s architecture hence empowers a very different form of monitoring and sorting. Its closed-off compounds define the everyday location of women and children; the *derb* structure delineates families and tribes, social classes, and types of handicraft from each other; and the narrow alleys, few axial streets and city gates structure movement between work, prayer, market and home (Wilbaux 2002).²⁹ In such context, few instruments were recently added for security management: To protect tourists from fraud, authorities required guides to register and wear badges. On the Old Town's rare open squares, they installed new cameras or integrated existing ones into the citywide surveillance system (cf. figure 4).³⁰ Some few shop owners set up rudimentary CCTV systems in the last three or four years, and since 2015, a handful of tourist cafés screens visitors with handheld metal detectors. These few innovations aside, traditional and mundane protection strategies remain dominant in the *Médina*. Thick walls, gated windows and tiny doors prohibit access to houses, block views

²⁸ Such as the arrival and assembly of men from other neighbourhoods and towns, foreigners overstaying the usual tourist visit, or academics enquiring into local security dispositives.

²⁹ Women are not the only group subject to strong societal regularisation. When male youngsters are sent off from parental home, they become no less difficult to survey for they convene in narrow alleys where the informant-based control mechanisms is already in operation. During adolescence, the *ami intime*, a close and trusted friend every young man ought to have, also helps controls men's behaviour, as does marriage later on.

³⁰ *Jemaa El-Fna* was equipped with 16 such cameras after the 2011 *Argana* attack already. Cameras in other Old Town open spaces, such as on *Bab Fteuh* and *Place des Férblantiers*, were installed in 2017.

onto courtyards, and deny entrance from the rooftop.³¹ Gates protect certain *derb* overnight, and shutters, latches and locks of all sorts safeguard the many workshops.

[Figure 4 about here]

Old Town security management, then, essentially operates through organised informants, experiential knowledge of the *terrain* and low-tech tools – neither state police, nor digital surveillance or statistical knowledge. This system differs strongly from the modernist version of ‘Deleuzian’ control circulating in security studies, but is extraordinarily effective despite its age and analogue character. The informant system is dissuasive in itself, and it renders police interventions highly targeted and effective should officers be called in. At the same time, its ambivalent relation with the population is much more personalised than elsewhere in the city. This is because residents live in close proximity to the agents monitoring them. Even if this is not talked about overtly, informants and *chefs de quartier* are widely known. They are seen, met and sometimes also greeted on the way to prayer or work. Unlike the impersonal uniformed security agents recruited from all over the country, they form part of everyday life for many years, and thus make the control system ever more proximate.³² Different to what control research suggests, tight regularisation of the population is thus not necessarily a novel phenomenon everywhere. Its expansion across space is also not new in the city case here, for the described system exists in all larger Moroccan settlements.

Lastly, the security ensemble currently centring on the *Médina* shows little signs of internationalisation. Considering its mode of operation this might be little surprising. Even if local information is occasionally forwarded to national authorities and then shared by those, a dispositive centred on informal knowledge, trusted sources, unwritten records, and opaque royal orchestration is poorly amendable to standardised transnational exchange. This said, certain justifications sustaining the *Médina*’s security ensemble ‘internationalise’. Terrorism, for instance, is not merely deemed threatening for the local physical damage it may cause, but also for its effect on international tourism, Marrakech’s main source of income.³³ Authorities are keen on keeping the Old Town safe – and on having it appear so – and this is also why the *Sûreté* doesn’t patrol in uniform, the *Brigade Touristique* assists tourists and evicts vagabonds, counterfeiters and *faux guides*, and the Foreign Ministry stresses Morocco’s

³¹ In the *Médina*, where building is limited to the height of a grown palm tree and thus fairly uniform, mobility across housetops can be easier than street-level movement.

³² A different situation applies to the many foreigners now visiting or living in the *Médina*. Tourists are rarely aware of the *Médina*’s informant system, and the more permanently installed foreign guesthouse owners tend to not participate actively in local politics, and certainly not claim a right to security sector oversight. Generally, foreigners also receive more welcoming treatment by the police, and are interrogated less harshly in case of misdemeanour (receiving no slaps in the face, for instance).

³³ One person working in Marrakech’s tourism industry sustains 5-6 family members. Should that industry crash, ‘we can drink tea or we can drink coffee’, a senior city official maintains, implying that there are hardly other things to do or earn from.

stability whenever an attack occurs elsewhere in North Africa. This said, more local and mundane concerns, such as small delinquency by scooter-based thieves, and cultural concerns with public drinking or the disrespect of Ramadan also justify the security system maintained in the conservative *Médina*.

Re-engaging control research's implied tenets

The described Moroccan control practices sometimes – through not always, and neither always radically if they do – differ from the general trajectories popularised by research anchored in Western cities and their distinctive contexts. As they do so, they foreground and question tenets implied in research that brings Deleuze's *Thesis* to security studies. For instance, Marrakech shows that while there is a proliferation of normalising actors also in Morocco, this process can take distinct forms and doesn't necessarily create an integrated policing whole: There is specialisation among police agents, but also continuing and expanding parallel-deployment of dissimilar security forces, from the *Sûreté* to the *Gendarmerie*, *Forces Armées Royales* and *Forces Auxilliaires*. At the same time, there is no discernible strategy to promote inter-agency cooperation between those services, or to include further public elements, such as first responders, transport officials, or City Hall. Expressing royal ruling logics – and reflecting a history of failed coup attempts by different uniformed forces – competencies are restricted to security agencies under the monarch's direction, but those and their mandates kept overlapping, incongruent and in competition with each other.

Similarly, and *prima facie*, Marrakech shows how urban security management can come to rely on increasingly numerous private actors. At the exception of the *Médina*, private guards acquired a certain visible presence in the city. Privatisation doesn't necessarily amount to a neoliberal outsourcing of state competencies, however. This is because the creation of a private Moroccan security market in the early 2000s did little more than to formalise an age-old system of *guardiennage*, i.e., unskilled neighbourhood guard for hire. It is also because the process essentially responded to new international hotel chains' demands for certified security personnel³⁴ – it reflects no desire whatsoever of the palace to outsource and thus abandon some of its (powerful) policing powers. Contrary to appearance, private security is and remains secondary to public authority, a relation confirmed by its poor equipment, lack of competencies, and voluntary reporting to the latter. Far from representing a 'private sector having broken free from constraints' (Loader 2000), private guard depicts a subordinated economy in Morocco, even an extension of state power through the private domain (Bogaert

³⁴ This is the case in Marrakech, where the tourism industry prevails. Elsewhere in Morocco, the construction of large European factories (especially, from the automobile sector) pushed formalisation of this market.

2011). Clearly, the public and the private sector may relate to one another in different and more complex ways than what is presumed by work on Western cities.

Uses of technology also subvert certain presumed trajectories. There is integrated use of high-tech surveillance in Southern Morocco – indeed, the sensing systems seem to be exploited considerably more systematically and instantaneously in Morocco than many Western places.³⁵ Yet, the technologically enhanced security dispositive nevertheless operates through proximity first and foremost in Marrakech. Identification of dangerous activity doesn't flow from databases and algorithms, but the numerous eyes on the ground, i.e., the truly uncountable security agents, auxiliary aides and cameras. With this, security management continues to draw heavily on 'premodern' (Valverde 2011) forms of monitoring and rapid response, not 'distant knowledge' and anticipatory interventions.³⁶ This also means that technological progress does not necessarily initiate a retreat of the state from public space, as not all political systems feature similar kinds of state-society relations. In Morocco, where royal rule is tightly guarded and power-diffusion viewed critically by the governing, high visibility of security personnel is a valuable steering function in itself. This logic also applies to the *Médina*, even if uniforms are absent there. Also in the Old Town, the presence of state agents is well known – not to tourists perhaps, but certainly to local residents and visitors from elsewhere in the country.

The historical paths taken by Marrakech's security ensembles, by contrast, stress how dispositives may evolve in less linear and more ambiguous and unsteady ways. In Marrakech, urban surveillance is now technologically processed and more mobile. Tight surveillance of the populace as such, however, is nothing new. Informant systems orchestrated by the palace are of old age, which means that control is no recent arrival in the Alaouite Kingdom. At the same time yet, if security apparatuses are traditionally widespread in Morocco, they are also notoriously ambivalent in operation. On paper, they became both better targeted and institutionalised. Illegal immigration was criminalised in 2002 and terrorism in 2003. Also in 2003, a new law restricted rights to public assembly and civil association. In the years after, penal law was repeatedly tightened, and in 2010, a new traffic code introduced additional measures for security work in public space. At the same time, the security sector was put on clearer legal footing – private security was regulated, state security services given statutes, and mandated to better respect human rights. In 2016, Morocco signed up to a small international security sector reform program.

³⁵ Where footage is mostly analysed *ex post*. By contrast, there is less prominent mobilisation of low-tech architectural measures in Marrakech.

³⁶ Generalised pre-deployment of police personnel is also a form of anticipatory intervention, of course, but it is not targeted to a specific expected event.

Yet, such texts do not necessarily translate into practice. Some laws still lack implementation decrees. More important, clientelist interests and political opportunity continue to influence whether and how penal provisions are implemented, human rights abuses investigated and reprimanded, or demonstrations and NGOs authorised and banned. Corruption of individual agents further complicates gauging the system's working, for it distorts the implementation of rules on the ground – depending on what security agent is met, different rules may or can be made to apply.³⁷ With this, the Marrakchi case sensitises to the fact that security ensembles may function in much less continuous ways than what research centring on technological control tools tends to presume. In Morocco, this ambivalence and volatility is not merely an outcome of poor security personnel training and limited technical skills. To certain extent, it is also a rationality of rule, for uncertainty about applicable rules induces self-restraint among the populace and stifles civil society activism.

If the evolution of security dispositives' restrictiveness is hence difficult to gauge in Morocco, their tense relation with democratic life writ large is easily confirmed. As mentioned earlier, all relevant security services are under exclusive control by the palace, as opposed to civil and elected government. Interaction with security agents is also difficult in everyday life. Unlike what is seen in Western cities, this is not because agents are few and thus difficult to find – to the contrary. It is because the very numerous forces are known potentially corrupt, and some even involved in criminal activities such as large-scale drug trafficking. Important parts of the population are hesitant to approach security personnel, also for some still associate those with the heavy-handed repression of Hassan II – the *années de plomb* that lasted into the late 1990s, and entailed disappearance, imprisonment and exiling of thousands of political opponents and democracy activists (Mattes 2014).

Indeed, also public debate about security remains difficult to this day (Saidy 2020). Government and parliament don't touch the theme, which is still widely considered a royal prerogative and hence simply taboo. The media uncritically endorses grand security discourses, unverifiable crime statistics, and the palace's twisted faulting of the public administration for any governance problem there might be. Instead of demanding security sector accountability, journalists largely approve the palace's emphasis on efficacy. Sometimes, they denounce NGO demands for improved human rights protection as treason. Local scholars, finally, tread patently lightly when it comes to writing or publishing about security governance – in the very few instances they make gestures towards the topic (cf. Maslouhi and Reifeld 2013). In this context, efforts as ambitious as citywide CCTV surveillance lack meaningful public questioning, and divergent positions on security affairs are difficult to detect. A few Marrakchi politicians, for instance, attempt to circumvent the

³⁷ It is also for such reason that ALSA always dispatches its own inspectors in case of accident, even if police is in place, for the latter's reporting is not trusted.

palace and its security prerogative by emphasising human development logics or the superior effectiveness of local government. A progressive collective of artists challenges the assembly ban by pushing street performances, which are prohibited by the same law, on open space.³⁸

Taken together, the security dispositive's relations with democratic ideals are thus difficult in the case of Morocco. This situation is nothing new to that society, however, and it does not derive from the ensembles' recent upgrading – precisely because the (re-)configuration of urban security in Marrakech does not depart from an *a priori* position of democratic rule. As a *mentalité de gouverner*, security also doesn't necessarily always trump alternative logics. De-territorialisation of security management, for instance, remains tilted to the domestic terrain. Morocco's geography (sea to the North and West, desert to the South), difficult diplomatic relations with neighbours (closed borders to Algeria in the East), opaque surveillance ensembles, and impenetrable royal governance network work against a wider internationalisation of the security dispositives in operation. Control emerges as a logic that doesn't necessarily override alternative factors, such as governance, diplomacy or geography.

At the same time, intra-urban comparison shows that control is also a function of physical environments and the kind of urban space on which it concentrates. The securing of public transport stands in as primary concern to Western polities and consequently, a large number of IR security studies works. But it is not equally important in terms of policing in Morocco, where mobility is less pronounced, and open public space – sites in which protestors can congregate in large number – constitutes authorities' most pressing concern. It is also less meaningful than the protection of international tourism, Morocco's primary source of income that operates in (and directly draws on the charm of) a distinctive architectural environment, the Old Town. As an example of security ensembles evolving in political, societal, economic and architectural context different to the 'norm' of international control research, Marrakech hence stresses the diversity of security dispositives and their reconfiguration. It highlights how their reconstitution and aims may vary across one and the same city even, and it gives indication as to their temporal fluctuation. Different to Western 24-hour-society models, Marrakchi life is geared to regular prayers, family life and trading opportunity. Train service times matter at the *Gare*, and streets are deserted after sunset in both the New and Old Town – at the exception of *Jemaa El-Fna*, which then turns into a magnet for all sorts of activities.

Finally, the Marrakchi security dispositives can be seen (re-)composing following other and further causes than those foregrounded by scholars drawing on Deleuze. In Marrakech,

³⁸ This also means that the 2011 democratisation movement disintegrated since, and as a result of prompt and unexpected constitutional reforms initiated by the palace – a regionalisation and decentralisation process that granted elected officials further competencies, but also multiplied political responsibilities and created infights among bureaucracies and parties (Saliba 2016). Salary increases to police, military and judges were an even faster royal response to the 'Arab spring' than the swift constitutional reform.

commercialization is no stranger. It creates a ‘need’ to evict beggars from the train station, and gradually turns the *Médina* into an orientalist tourist fantasy. But neoliberal logic doesn’t operate on security dispositives uniformly, or in the way generally accepted. In the *Médina*, it stimulates absence of visible security personnel. But it doesn’t initiate or accompany a retreat of the state otherwise, neither in the New Town where private guards voluntarily report to state security forces. Discourses of catastrophic terrorist harm, by contrast, are important in Morocco, and used in impressively alarmist ways there. Albeit not connected directly to 9/11, they do justify important parts of the security apparatus, especially its militarization.³⁹ Yet, there are also more mundane or culturally specific concerns driving security management, such as the prevention of petty crime, new highway routes, public alcohol consumption, or disrespect of Ramadan. Most importantly, protection of the political *status quo* is a superior justification for enhanced security management.

Conclusion

The French philosopher’s *Control Thesis* offers productive leverage to international security studies. Commenting on Foucault, it asks to investigate the dynamic re-configuration of complex security dispositives, i.e., to assess evolving agency landscapes, the introduction of new technologies, the de-territorialisation of security management, and its relations with democratic ideals and political resistance. Yet, works that transpose Deleuze’s control argument into security research show a tendency to universalise empirical practices that are themselves rooted in distinctive contexts. As such, they are in great danger of normalising control research to a fairly provincial model North. In order to counter this tendency and develop a more truly international understanding of the dynamic evolution of contemporary security ensembles, it is paramount to consciously investigate how security dispositives relate to specific political, economic, cultural, technological, and architectural contexts. Cities in the Global South – such as here, Marrakech – are not the only possible candidates for such a globalisation of security research. But they are surely productive research sites in this regard. Security assemblages evolving in very different constitutive contexts are particularly powerful for de-familiarising control research, as they prompt scholars particularly straightforwardly to reflect on implied ideas of state-society relations, governance and insecurity (Handler 2009).

Taking Deleuze-inspired control research beyond its ‘comfort zone’ indeed generates sizable scholarly benefits. At the simple *empirical level*, it empowers insightful descriptions of complex urban security arrangements hitherto ignored. Adding to anthropology, geography

³⁹ To tackle radicalisation, authorities also tightened regulations of the religious sector. Houses of worship must be registered, and the sale and production of burkas is banned. Imams are trained by government, and women can now become some sort of religious leaders.

and urban studies work on more select aspects of urban security, it facilitates apprehensions of complex control ensembles regularly overlooked – such as in Marrakech in this article. Thanks the systematisation heuristic offered by Deleuze's *Thesis*, these can be brought into productive conversations (or be compared disjunctively, Lazar 2012) across city spaces, municipalities and countries. In *methodological terms*, by contrast, contextualisation prompts research to become better cognizant of – and more explicit about – scope conditions. It asks scholars to more consequently probe observed security practices spatial and temporal distinctiveness, and pushes them to reflect on how far arguments travel. Insights such as obtained in Marrakech thus implicitly also provincialize scholarship (Chakrabarty 2000, Roy and Ong 2011): They clarify that accounts centring on New York or London provide instructive ideas of control in those places, but also that such quality doesn't turn them into easy representatives of the wider, more complex and diverse global 'age of control'. Put in research design terms, this means that contextualisation may not only reduce the danger of generalising findings beyond remit, but also that it can lead to better delineated and hence more reliable studies.

Most important yet, the described engagement with 'other cases and contexts' contributes strongly to security studies' *analytical* development. The existence of different, sometimes more asynchronous and unsteady trajectories and principles of rule prompts scholars to revisit the categories by which they diagnose security ensembles. It provides them with broader ideas of how security ensembles operate, and sensitises them to practices too easily overlooked in all casework, including in work on Western cities. For instance, Marrakech straightforwardly questions the purported superior agency of the business sector – a point that is also most useful for investigations into Western cities, where the characterisation of private power too often strikes as exceedingly generous and undifferentiated. Or, Marrakech puts centre stage the question of what authoritarianism in and through security means in which context. This is not merely useful for casework in polities whose power-sharing arrangements deviate so blatantly from democratic models. It is also useful for research centring on democratic polities and the Global North, where strong hierarchies and decisionist 'police powers' persist despite liberal mechanisms and ideals (Valverde 2003), and relations between security and democracy are recurrently conceptualised in all too binary and simplistic ways in critical scholarly circles (Glasius 2018, Hagmann, Hegemann and Neal 2018).

In a similar vein, the observed unsteadiness and orientations of the Moroccan city's security ensembles – the influence of corruption, but also the diverging finalities enacted in different spaces – forces all scholarship to become more sensitive to the volatility of security practices, their lacunas, hours of non-operation and intra-urban variance, and to be wary of portraits that depict security ensembles as continuous or citywide uniform machineries. The insight that human agents and mundane technologies such as walls, gates and locks play crucial roles in

security production usefully cautions security studies against a hasty – and also in Western cases exceedingly simplistic (Hagmann 2017) – modernist reduction of control to digital instruments and statistical knowledge(s). The realisation that a highly visible security apparatus has strong steering effects in and of itself invites to more thoroughly engage the politics of visibility also in the securing of Northern cities, where such effects are tactically enacted at potentially violent gatherings, or for counter-terrorist and pandemic policing. And the evidence that local issues such as protests, drinking or a new highway route contribute strongly to the reconfiguration of a city's security ensembles, finally, prompts scholars to take critical distance from grand narratives centring on 9/11 and neo-liberalism writ large, and to generate more detailed and – dare one say – also much more tangible and convincing accounts of the drivers of normalising systems instead.

Taken together, much is hence to gain for security studies when research on evolving control ensembles is conducted in a more global manner – and Marrakech only gives glimpses of that potential. When scholars more consciously recognise and engage analytical assumptions, more thoroughly explore the limits of their laboratories, and take security practices in places such as Southern Morocco seriously – which means allow them to contribute on equal standing and in their own right to international analytical scaffolding, as opposed to (dis-)qualifying them as mere nice-to-know empirical expressions of some exotic or apart places (Sheppard, Leitner and Maringanti 2013, Bham 2020) –, then a considerably more precise, refined and global understanding of contemporary security practices can be developed. Considering the planetary variety of political systems, cultures and cities, but also the profound political, societal and ethical challenges posed by contemporary urbanisation and the continuously perfecting control ensembles, such a move not only promises to be a productive scholarly agenda. It indeed also strikes as a much overdue endeavour.

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